

BOARD OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

September 9-10th, 2008
AmericInn Lodge & Suites
Ft. Pierre, South Dakota

BOARD	Monte Tschetter	Dan Rounds	Joe Rehurek
MEMBERS	Grady Kickul	Melissa Flor	Robert Kean
PRESENT:	Elaine Roberts	Chris Olson	Cindy Koupal
	Kathy Hassebrook		
	Craig Eschenbaum		

MEMBERS ABSENT:	Beth Haug	Mary I'atala
	Lyle Cook	James Hayes

OTHERS PRESENT:	Bernie Grimme	Keith Rouse
	Rich Eschenbaum	Ronda Williams
	Colette Wagoner	Faith Ellis

CALL TO ORDER: Monte Tschetter, Chairperson called the meeting to order at 1:15 PM. He welcomed everyone, especially new members and thanked everyone for traveling to attend the meeting.

WELCOME: Monte asked attendees to introduce themselves, to include background information about how they came to be on the Board, and if they had past experience working with vocational rehabilitation (VR) services, as an individual with a disability, family member, service provider, employer, etc. Monte asked Colette (Board staff) to provide background information on members who were unable to attend.

VR BASICS AND HOW DO I FIT IN? Grady Kickul, Director of the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS or Division) also welcomed everyone. He informed members of the Division falling under the Department of Human Services as the umbrella agency and spoke of the other divisions as well. He talked about the massive use of

acronyms in this field and stressed to members to please jump in, ask questions and never hesitate to ask for clarification. He asked staff to send the acronym listing to the entire Board in the next mailing.

How do we all fit in here? Grady explained that each member has either worked with the VR system, has been a past user of services, maybe a current recipient of services, or has a family member that utilizes services (past or present user of services). Some members around the table represent service providers, employers, or human resource managers who have worked with the agency at some point in time. Members were appointed because they are concerned citizens, passionate about assisting individuals with disabilities becoming employed. He shared that members are knowledgeable and have valuable experience and that their input is needed. Members have been appointed to help make VR better for all who use it in South Dakota. The Division needs members' input, ideas, suggestions and feedback. That's why members have been appointed and that's how members fit in. Division staff is committed to working together, becoming a team and working to achieve common goals. He again welcomed members to the Board.

VR Basics: Grady explained that VR is many things to many people. VR is about the Youth Leadership Forum, National Disability Employment Awareness Month, Project Skills for high school students, public meetings, personnel development, rehabilitation counselors, education requirements, Employment Resource Networks, Plans for Achieving Self Support, benefits specialists, Transition Liaison Project, Medical Assistance for Workers with Disabilities, Freedom To Work Project, rehabilitation service providers, Mike Walling benefits training, successful employment outcomes, and many other related things. Mostly it's about helping others to earn a paycheck, raise families, and live independently. Yes VR, can include a multiple listing of things that we are involved with in some way or another, and over time these will all become familiar to members.

INTRODUCTION OF THE ON-LINE STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL (SRC) TRAINING SERIES: Bernie explained how all states have State Rehabilitation Councils (SRCs), and here in SD it is called the Board of Vocational Rehabilitation (Board or BVR). One of the best training tools they've found to explain and train people on the basics of Vocational Rehabilitation is the SRC National Training Series found online at www.erehab.org. He pulled this website up and showed how easily one can maneuver around the website, register your email address and take these online training modules.

- ✓ Members watched the first Series, starting with Module 1, "The History of Vocational Rehabilitation", Bernie handed out very short quizzes, and round table discussions included reviewing and completing the quiz together. Bernie reviewed the correct answers and discussion continued as questions were raised.
- ✓ Next was Module 2, "Overview of the Rehabilitation Act", again, round table discussion followed with a short quiz, and then the review of correct answers.

A short break was taken at this point in the meeting.

- ✓ Bernie started us through Module 3, "VR Principles and Policies", followed by further round table discussion and the quiz, with the review of correct answers.
- ✓ Module 4, "The Roles of the SRC", was next. Again, this was followed by round table discussion amongst each group and the quiz with Bernie then reviewing the correct answers.
- ✓ There was consensus among members to delay the viewing of "SRC Infrastructure" at this point in the day.

Monte adjourned the meeting at 5:00 pm.

MEETING RECONVENED (Wednesday, September 10, 2008): Monte, Chair, reconvened the meeting at 8:40 am.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS: Monte welcomed everyone back and hoped they had a nice evening in the Pierre/Ft. Pierre area. He reminded members of the meeting protocol which was attached to the agenda.

OPENING ACTIONS: A motion was made to approve the agenda as presented, Made (M), Seconded (S) and Carried (C). A motion was made to approve the Board meeting minutes from June 19-20, 2008 as written was (M), (S) and (C). A motion to approve the August 26, 2008 Executive Committee conference call meeting minutes as written was (M), (S) and (C).

PUBLIC COMMENTS: Robert Kean, Executive Director of South Dakota Advocacy Services (SDAS), provided everyone with some reference materials and business cards. He provided a brief overview of their non-profit organization designated by the Governor to protect the rights of people with disabilities. One of the programs (one out of 8) is the Client Assistance Program (CAP) and he handed out their proposed 2009 Goals and Objectives. Robert reported that their Board will meet on September 20th to approve these new items, so review these if you would like, and contact him with any questions or input you may like to contribute before then. He added that if anyone has any questions, please don't hesitate to contact him.

Elaine Roberts, Director of SD Parent Connection, gave everyone copies of their updated quarterly newsletter. She added they also have a twice-monthly electronic version of an email newsletter called, *weConnect*. This will be an information source for families with children (ages birth – 26) with disabilities or special health care needs and the professionals serving them. She stressed that we are all in this together and need to remember how closely tied all our objectives really are, so stay connected by emailing sdpc@sdparent.org or go online at www.sdparent.org and sign up to receive this e-newsletter. She invited individuals to submit information on events, trainings or other breaking news to be included in the newsletters.

Staff explained how the Board is required to include a Public Comment period during the meeting. This timeframe is designed for individuals or organizations to attend and provide comment or input to the Board regarding vocational rehabilitation services. It is also a time for members and others to bring forth a matter or issue that is not on the agenda.

DIVISION DIRECTOR'S REPORT: Director's Comments: Grady thanked both Robert and Elaine for their valuable information, especially since new Board members will appreciate these information sources as they learn and grow more comfortable with their duties. And that yes, it is important to stay abreast of what's happening in the disability community. He reiterated again that he is very excited about this important transition timeframe and added vitality of new Board members, and thanked them again for their commitment. Grady pointed out that when voting, DRS agency employees cannot vote (such as himself and Joe Rehurek) as appointed members, but they can make motions and seconds. VR Portfolio to Employment: Grady displayed a sample of one item utilized by the Division entitled, "Your Vocational Rehabilitation Portfolio to Employment". He asked staff to mail these out to members or hand them out at the next meeting. Then, Grady asked that it be added as an agenda item at the next meeting, and Bernie could provide a more detailed outline.

Division of Disability Determination Services (DDS): Grady explained this agency fell under the umbrella of the Division. DDS had a taskforce to review and analyze the determination process and customer service. The task force drafted an implementation plan to try and reduce the time it takes to go through the process, plus try to make it easier for applicants. A report was issued on August 20th, which will help dispel myths surrounding the determination process, and helps clarify how and where it can be improved upon. The full report is available on the DRS website, under the Department of Human Services. Being quite familiar with this process, Monte outlined the timeframe of determining a

person's eligibility for social security benefits proving that it truly is a long ordeal. And if there are appeals involved, it takes even longer for a determination. Robert agreed and shared that it's great to have something that will work to dispel misunderstandings and myths. From his agencies' experience, they frequently see the impact of agencies that are understaffed, and noted the backlogs that arise from this issue. Dan agreed that the mere "definition" of disabilities causes troubles, that it is different at so many levels, among different agencies or programs. Grady agreed with what was mentioned, and added that DDS utilizes the most stringent definition of disability and it's about determining "CAN they still work or not" and not about determining "are they actually disabled or not". Craig added that at the Mike Walling SSDI/SSI trainings, he sees a lot of people who are totally confused about whether they can work, and if so, how much can they make before losing benefits or not, and if it's all worth it to try to work and maintain disability benefits.

DRS Budget Update: Grady reported that the Division's budget is approximately \$20 million, which is responsible for serving 6,000 consumers annually and maintaining 100 staff in 12 offices statewide. Of this budget:

- Client Services totals \$5 million
- Independent Living (IL) Case Services totals \$1 million
- Disability Determination Services totals \$3.3 million (with a staff of 30)
- Assistive Daily Living Services (ADLS) totals \$3.9 million
- Telecommunication Relay Services for the Deaf totals \$1.3 million

This past year the Division came in a little under budget, but two years ago they were quite over budget and on an Order of Selection. It is all about client flow, and the inability to control or predict the demand for services. In response to a question it was stated that general state funds are not allowed to be carried over from one year to the next, but federal funds can be carried over. Grady also reported that there are no

waiting lists for the attendant care or neuromuscular programs. For the FY 2010 year, the Division is requesting to expand the ADLS programs by 5 consumers, at roughly \$30,000 per person, that's an additional \$150,000. Inflation will also be requested for the IL program.

State Plan Submission Process: Grady reported that the State Plan was submitted to Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) in June. RSA has requested additional information, which has been submitted. The plan will have an effective date of October 1st, 2008. Draft/Final Policies: Grady had Bernie discuss the DRS/DSBVI draft Financial Needs Policy and the Service Rates Program Guide. He noted changes on the draft items are minor, mostly language clean up. One of the key points being modified on the Financial Needs Policy was on page 2, item 5 regarding "computer related devices". These draft items are on the web and open for Public Comment for about one month. He asked members to please review these documents and if they would like to comment or ask questions, please do so in the next few weeks. In response to a question, it was explained that draft policies are reviewed by the Consumer Services Committee, and the question was posed whether they needed more volunteers to serve on this Committee or not? After discussion it was the general consensus that it is too early to expect the new members to be ready to volunteer for committees when they haven't had much experience or time to think about what they are expected to do. So Grady requested staff to send a listing of the committees (roles and duties) to the members. Robert asked if members are required to be on at least one committee? Grady replied no, not required but this is a manner of how the Board completes some of its duties. A motion was made to have the full Board review the draft policies at that the next meeting and take action. MS. Discussion was brought up again that to have the entire Board do this will be very time consuming and not a good use of time, that's what the Consumer Services Committee is designed to do. It was noted that the committee has three or four existing members, so they could review these items before the next meeting. The motion and second were

withdrawn. The Committee will review the draft policies and meet before the next meeting in Pierre on November 13th and 14th, 2008.

National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM): NDEAM is coming in October. The Division and the Board fund events and activities across the state to promote to workers with disabilities and employers who value and hire qualified individuals with disabilities. Grady indicated he is happy this year with the national poster that features South Dakota's Mt. Rushmore; it is great exposure for our state. The NDEAM theme is, "America's People... America's Talent... America's Strength!" The listing of statewide events was read by Grady, and is attached as updated. It will be sent to all members. It was explained that the Public Awareness Committee reviews the community's proposals and funding requests and then provides their funding recommendations to the Board for their review, consideration and action. 2008 SD RehabACTion Fall Conference: Bernie reviewed the details on the upcoming SD RehabACTion Fall Conference to be held at the Best Western Ramkota Hotel in Rapid City, October 14-16th. This year's theme, "*Work's for Me! Empowering Today's Workforce*". The event will feature many exciting speakers, many nationally known, plus booths of the related organizations. If members are interested in attending, contact staff to assist with making arrangements and processing the registration fee. For more conference details call Bernie at 605-773-6284, or visit online at www.SDRehabACTion.org.

BOARD'S BYLAWS: Colette briefly reviewed the BVR Bylaws that had been mailed to members. She pointed out the most recent amendment made by the Board was on page 4, Article IV; Officers; Section 1 that reads, "At least one of the officers shall be a past or present recipient of services, or a parent or family member of an individual who is or has been a recipient of vocational rehabilitation services". This action was taken to make the language less stringent. Staff shared that the Board wanted to revisit the bylaws in their entirety for any additional changes. Consensus was to let this rest awhile until new members have time to absorb everything.

BREAK: Monte called for a ten-minute break.

FUTURES INITIATIVE PROJECT UPDATE: Bernie explained what the Futures Initiative Project is and stated that it is going very well. The project is designed to provide staff with exposure to higher-level administrative skill development areas. The Division has five staff members who are in the midst of finishing up their first round of projects. Ann Fortin (DRS/Aberdeen) is doing research on World of Work Inventory (WOWI), and she will provide training to other rehabilitation counselors on how to utilize this with consumers. Joe indicated that he is also working with the project. He reported that he and a co-worker Jennifer Trenhaile, are revising a consumer brochure to be more user-friendly. It will be presented to other VR counselors for future input. It will be made available when finalized and approved. In the Sioux Falls district office, Vicki Nelson and Melody Boetel are revising the Fee Schedule Program and other similar guides. They are attempting to combine it into one program. Bernie explained this ties back to the goals and objectives of increasing job placements incentive packages, defining successful job placements and improving wages. Monthly conference calls are held with state office staff regarding project updates and questions and moving the project forward. Grady added that several of these staff members would be attending national conferences. He also pointed out that Futures Initiatives Project staff are “volunteers”, working on these items in addition to their workload.

EMPLOYER RESOURCE NETWORK (ERN): Kathy Hassebrook, BVR member, and contact for the Aberdeen Area Human Resource Association (AAHRA) gave a summary of ERN (called “earn”) as being a partnership between human resource managers in the business world and VR professionals. It’s designed to address diversity and labor issues by sharing information, resources, trainings, etc. and creating a strong networking process to create a win/win situation for all. ERN also works closely with the Society of Human Resource Management (SHRM) and VR to share job candidates and provide ADA trainings, including disability etiquette trainings. Targeting this group has helped

due to their large numbers and direct link to the hiring process. Biggest challenges initially were getting past the first round of contacts and getting heard, but now diversity committees, etc, are actually seeking her out. Last fall they held a conference for 200 attendees including employers and VR professionals, and challenged them to work harder towards gaining a more diverse workforce. Some hard facts to show it's having an impact this year:

- They've successfully placed 18 people with disabilities in jobs,
- Trained 114 people at four different events,
- DRS staff in Aberdeen is hearing a lot about ERN from area employers who are starting to ask about it now.

Kim Crossan, District Supervisor, of the Aberdeen DRS office, is also a main contact for ERN in Aberdeen. Dan Round, as Freedom to Work Project staff, is also an ERN contact in Pierre. There's now interest from the town of Brookings to implement their own ERN style project, and Sioux Falls has started something similar to ERN. Grady added that he thinks ERN is the most exciting thing in VR right now. It is helping us shift the focus from people with disabilities being our customers to including more businesses and employers as customers, something we've been needing to do better for a long time. He really hopes to see ERN activities grow in other communities.

OTHER BUSINESS: Dan brought up an idea to try and invite Richard Pimentel to join the Board at their June 2009 meeting. Mr. Pimentel, a nationally known speaker advocating for the rights of people with disabilities and one of the original ADA authors, will already be in Aberdeen the same time frame for the Youth Leadership Forum (YLF), and maybe we could utilize his expertise in some fashion. His current well known work is the movie called, "The Music Within", which was also featured at YLF this year. Grady asked the staff to purchase a few copies of this movie and have it available to "share" and loan out to members. Discussion was held on ideas to possibly partner with SHRM of Aberdeen, ERN, DRS, and the Board to plan one large event for next

June, and to allow time for Public Comment. Kathy happily volunteered to spearhead or assist in the planning of such an event.

CLOSING ACTIONS: Next Meeting: November 13th and 14th, the Board meeting will be held in Pierre, and hosting a luncheon with SD Association of Community Based Services, at approximately 11:45 a.m., Thursday, Nov. 13th, at the Best Western Ramkota Hotel and Convention Centre. All of their 17 agency CEOs or Directors will be on hand, some new ones and some long term folks in the mix. The Association is really changing at this time and our relationship with them is crucial now. This will be an important opportunity to review what we all do, what's working and what's not, and to get feedback. This time can be utilized to obtain public comment on the provision on VR services. When discussing the logistics of the luncheon, Grady asked staff to ensure that at least one Board member and one VR staff person is at every table to have a good mix. The Board meeting will start at approx. 1:30 or 2:00 p.m., across the street at the Pierre Area Chamber of Commerce building, until 5:00 p.m. The meeting will continue Friday morning, Nov. 14th, 8:30 a.m. until 12:00 (noon), also at the Chamber of Commerce. Sleeping room arrangements for members are being made at the Holiday Inn Express, Ft. Pierre for the night of the 13th.

ADJOURNMENT: Motion to adjourn the meeting – MSC. Meeting was adjourned at 11:46 a.m. Both Monte and Grady thanked everyone for their time and input.